Legislative leadership bought, sold on the Hill

Kim Burningham

House Speaker David Clark intends to run again for speaker. May that explain why Clark is currently pooling thousands of dollars of money to potential Republican members who will later vote for his leader? Or is he simply sincere? (On any event, he’s not spending his money, it comes from lobbyist and special-interest interests.)

While in the primaries were held, Clark had started peddling dollars to potential members of the House. Clark’s June 30 financial report indicated that since the first of the year, he has raised more than $140,000, the majority from special interest groups. He has contributed between $5,000 and $10,000 or so to a dozen other men who were running for office.

The candidates were located throughout the state from Logan to Murray and from Draper to Kanab. Most of them have never served before, and for some reason Clark was eager to help them get elected.

Some candidates receive the basics. They accept donations from legislators who may end up sitting against another one in election competitions. For example, Kenneth Ivory, who is running for office in the St. George area, accepted a $5,000 contribution from Clark, but also accepted a smaller contribution of $250 from “Friends of Carl Wimmer” Wimmer has been mentioned as a potential challenger to Clark.

Verifying all the giving that has taken place from potential leaders to legislative candidates is not yet possible. Wimmer, for instance, reports zero campaign expenses or contributors. Although most legislation had a file of contributions on candidates who were held by April 15, and occasionallyunable to file legislators like Wimmer report no campaign expenditures. I doubt those reports are truly. Few legislators are those are contributions or sharing money through political action committees. Such committees are not required to publish reports with the same frequency as candidates. This may be a deliberate effort to circumvent the current campaign reporting law.

Because of the Utah legislative session’s brevity, and also because the leadership assembles special-interest groups. He has not required to submit reports himself from Clark, but others use that money to increase influence, much power is transferred to a few leaders and the lobbyists who influence them. Leadership candidates dissolve suggestions about “purchasing votes” by arguing that they are helping friends helping friends. Perhaps. However, the nauseating nature of these transactions is that the recipients of leadership largesse are bound — they don’t cross the giver of money, lest the age might be turned off. “Party discipline” comes at a real price to the public interest, especially when donors’ private agendas come up for a vote. Curtis made a very public show of dismissing himself from discussions about a St. George airport which stood to earn a vote.

Debbie Ghiglieri, Operations Manager

Coit was able to clean our tile so well. We saved several thousand dollars.

Curtis amassed a bank account in excess of $800,000 largely contributed by lobbyists. According to Bob Bernard, a competitor in the Desert News (Jan. 8, 2000) Curtis “gave money, or more accurately, donations to fellows who GPS house numbers, hopefully end- oring them to vote for him as speaker one more time.”

Shelton Killpack was a leader in the Utah Senate before his resignation was prompted by a drunken driving charge. Many expected that he would work for a leadership position again. He gathered nearly $400,000 in contributions, coming heavily from lobbyists. As the 2008 election approached, Killpack contributed to many fellow senators or candidates who were up for election including $10,000 to Dan Liljenquist; $5,000 to Robert Brogren, $5,000 to Karl Andreasen; $10,000 to Alon Christensen; $10,000 to Carlene Walker, and $5,000 to Eddie Finken. Alliances created by money have become commonplace in the Utah Legis-

Utahns for Ethical Leadership should be a leader in the Utah Senate who very much loves her calling her communist] just as many in Utah Valley, a love- ist, who very much loves her calling her communist] just as many in Utah Valley, a love-